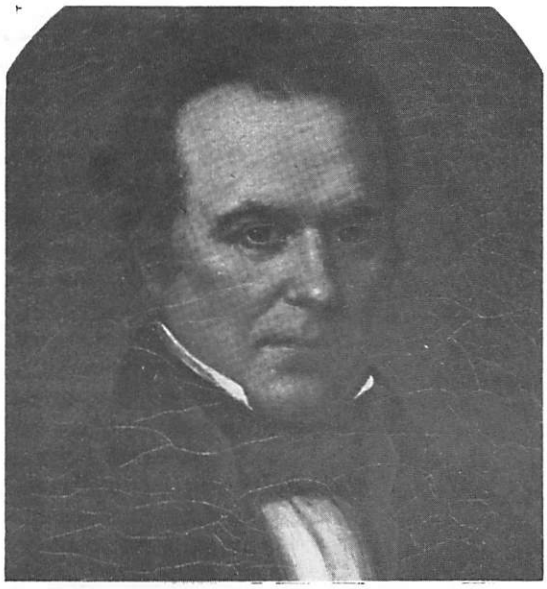


The Bethel Courier.

VOLUME IX, NUMBER 2 SUMMER 1985 BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Dr. Moses Mason



Agnes Straw Mason

MASON PORTRAITS INCLUDED IN NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY CATALOG

by Catherine S-C. Newell

The portraits of Doctor and Mrs. Moses Mason by Chester Harding, treasured possessions of the Bethel Historical Society, have been given an added lustre through the recent attention being shown this American artist who painted these companion portraits. Since the appearance of the article introducing the portraits and their artist which appeared in the first issue of the *Courier* in 1976, Chester Harding has been the subject of additional historical examination and renewed critical acclaim, culminating in the current Harding exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. *A TRUTHFUL LIKENESS: Chester Harding and His Portraits* is the title given the exhibit catalog by Leah Lipton. This volume provides an excellent biography of Harding, as well as a chronological arrangement of the fifty-five paintings included in the exhibit. Of particular interest to Society members is the checklist of all known Harding paintings, which includes the Mason portraits, attributed to the peak of Harding's career in the 1830s.

Harding's popularity was based on his engaging personality, his ability to achieve a "likeness," and on his marketing strategy. He moved his studio frequently to locations well-suited to the portrait market: England to paint the aristocracy, Washington, D.C. to paint nearly every political leader of consequence, and Boston to establish a solid reputation with the leaders of society during the 1830s. Doctor and Mrs. Mason's choice of Harding to paint their portraits was a logical one, given his reputation both with political leaders and polite society in New England.

The Mason portraits are most interesting when compared with other Harding paintings of the same period. There is great similarity between the treatment of Doctor Mason and Abbott Lawrence, with the subdued background, and the strong light on the face and shirtfront. Mrs. Mason's portrait with far greater attention to detail in background and clothing manages to escape the pre-occupation with such details characteristic of a number of Harding's female portraits, in particular the 1827 portrait of Mrs. Daniel Webster.

The chronological arrangement of the Harding paintings allows the viewer to witness the transformation in Harding's style from a self-taught frontier painter to a rapid learner with an ability to capture likenesses, finally to a polished artist of sensitivity (his advice to aspiring artists "Draw, draw, draw!"). The full length portrait of Amos Lawrence in his paisley robe and bedroom slippers, done in 1845, and identified by Harding as "the best thing I have ever done in my whole artistic career" is a testimony to Harding's perseverence and talent. Harding's late work from the 1850s and 1860s is clearly influenced by the advent of photography, with static poses, sharp detail and smooth surfaces, as well as a more lurid palette, which Lipton attributes to the influence of hand-tinted photographs or the availability of cadmium pigments.

The Mason portraits were completed during the high point of Chester Harding's career and a visit this summer to the Harding exhibit will be a treat for Society members.

SUDBURY CANADA DAYS
August 10-11, 1985

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(Continued on page 4)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Society expects a busy summer and fall with a number of special exhibits and events featured. In the meeting room of the Dr. Moses Mason House this summer are exhibits "From Revolution to Statehood: Maine Towns 1783-1820," "Neatness, Comfort and Independence: Life in Federal Period Maine", "Treaty of Paris 1783" and "William Rogers Chapman: Musician." In the fall we will have the film "From Stump to Ship," which documents logging in Maine during the 1930s. In October we will have the exhibit "A Good Stand of Buildings: Improvement and Reform of the Nineteen Century Maine Farm" in the meeting room and assist with the arrangements for a conference on rural reform which relates to this exhibit.

Of course we will have our usual historical films each Wednesday afternoon during July and August at 4 p.m. And don't forget the annual Sudbury Canada Days this year to be held on August 10 and 11.

Alden T. Kennett

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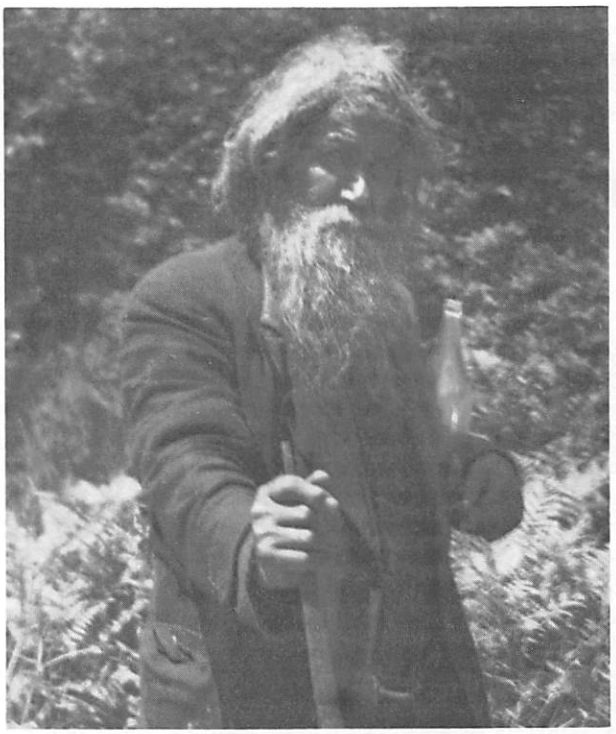
NEW HONORARY MEMBER

On May 30, 1985 the Society Trustees elected Albert Skillings of Bethel to Honorary membership in the Society. He joins Elizabeth Mason Carter and Floribel Haines as the only living members in this category holding the Society's highest honor for long records of service.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Almost from the earliest days, visitors to New England and New Englanders themselves have possessed a particular fascination for those individuals whose habits, lifestyles and/or appearance were decidedly unconventional. These men and women — every New England town could boast one or more at any given time — were known as town characters. Some were feared, some greatly beloved, others only appreciated (and perhaps romanticized) after their death. The Society is interested in learning details relating to town characters in the western Maine area for possible publication in a future issue of the Courier. Elsewhere in this issue Blaine Mills has collected stories concerning a remarkable character in Bethel's neighboring town of Greenwood. I hope readers will find this an inspiration to record memories of other town characters.

SRH



"Benny" Wells - Photo Courtesy of Blaine Mills

"BENNY": THE HERMIT OF GREENWOOD CITY
by Blaine A. Mills

Benjamin Newell Wells, better known as "Benny", spent the last half of his life living in his small one room shanty on Hicks Pond in Greenwood, Maine. Over the years Benny's fame spread. He was well-liked by almost everyone. Although meticulously honest he was considered very eccentric. To most people, Benny's appearance and habits were as amusing as they were shocking.

I never knew "Benny"; he died when I was only five years old, but my mother and her family knew him. I have known at least one hundred and fifty people who also knew him. "Benny" was a legend in his own time, and he is still remembered today. Over the years some of the stories about "Benny" have been exaggerated so it is difficult to sort out the facts from the fiction.

"Benny" was born in Norway, Maine on December 2, 1868, the son of Thomas and Rebecca Wells. His father was a native of England and was said to have arrived in this country in the service of the Royal Navy. His mother was the daughter of Henry Herrick and a native of Patch Mountain in Greenwood.

"Benny" was an only child and grew to manhood near Patch Mountain. His only schooling consisted of a few months at the little one room school house on Patch Mountain where "Benny" said he got enough "learnin to figger and print." His parents moved to Norway when he was a young man. Within a few years "Benny" purchased a farm in Norway. About this time his father was taken sick and died. "Benny" worked the farm for a few years until it was completely destroyed by fire. He and his mother then moved to Portland, Maine, where she had relatives.

During the next ten years "Benny" was employed by the Maine Central Railroad. For a short time he worked on boats in and around Casco Bay. It has also been reported that he was at one time an ash man in Portland. "Benny" never could get accustomed to city life, so shortly after 1900 he turned his back on Portland and returned to the town of Greenwood, where he had grown up.

WILLIAM ROGERS CHAPMAN
(1855-1935)
Musician



William Rogers Chapman, Bethel's famed musician and conductor, occupies a unique position in American musical history. Born of Maine parents in Hanover, Massachusetts, where his father Rev. William Rogers Chapman was then serving as a Congregational pastor, he was descended from a long line of Chapmans closely associated with Bethel's founding and settlement. (His great grandfather Rev. Eliphaz Chapman proposed the town's name in 1796). Rev. W.R. Chapman was a friend of Cyrus W. Field, the financier, who introduced the pastor and his wife, the former Emily Bishop, to Jenny Lind, the famed "Swedish Nightingale," during a trip to Europe.

Left fatherless at the age of three months (and christened upon his father's coffin), young William Rogers Chapman spent his boyhood in Bethel where his mother returned after her husband's death. Here he attended Gould Academy. When he was thirteen his mother married William J. Valentine of New York City and the family moved to Fordham to live. Young Chapman's education was continued at the School of the Collegiate Dutch Reformed Church, where he took a preparatory course for the ministry in compliance with his father's request. His interests, however, showed a marked inclination for music so his studies were diverted to that field. After studying with some of the best teachers in America, he was sent to Europe to continue his education in Leipsig and Berlin.

Upon his return to the United States, he became organist in a large church in New York. He also received at the same time an appointment as teacher of vocal music in the New York City public schools, where he remained for ten years. In 1877, Chapman married a distant cousin, Emma Louise Faulkner of Chicago; they had one daughter, Cornelia Bishop.

Besides his church and school work, he founded and conducted the Mursurgia Society for male voices, the Apollo Club of male voices and the Rubinstein Club of women's voices, followed by the Metropolitan Musical Society of mixed voices. As a result of these activities he became well-known in New York musical circles.

Later Chapman organized and directed music festivals in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont as well as in northern New York State and the province of New Brunswick. These festivals under his direction achieved international renown since he succeeded in bringing to them some of the world's greatest artists and orchestras.

In 1926, the last year he directed the famed Maine Music Festival begun in 1897, Chapman was awarded the Honorary degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Maine at Orono, the first person to be so honored by that University.

Through the years Chapman had three residences in Bethel: two houses in Mayville and finally the big house overlooking the Bethel Common. He and his family are buried among several generations of ancestors in Bethel's Riverside Cemetery overlooking the Androscoggin River.



Dr. Chapman driving a favorite horse, Main Street, Bethel, c. 1910.

"Benny" bought a small one room shanty on Patch Mountain and moved it to a small clearing on Hicks Pond at Greenwood City. Here "Benny" would spend the rest of his life. He never really worked again, just lived from day to day. There was no doubt about it; Benny's favorite pastime was fishing; he was a familiar sight around Hicks Pond with his great long bamboo fish pole. "Benny" would take home bass, pickerel, suckers, perch, eels, but flatfish was his favorite. Many old timers still remember that "Benny" always had fish scales in his beard all summer long. It was during the fishing season that "Benny" received his only income.

"Benny" owned three flat-bottomed row boats that he rented to visiting fishermen for the sum of ten cents an hour. "Benny" said that he recorded all of these transactions in his account book because it should make it a lot easier to settle up his estate when he passed on. He said that he had been troubled with rats which infested his shanty and complained that "they've even et up some of the pages in my account book."

"Benny" was also a good marksman, and his trusty old shotgun would nearly always get him a meal. He was never too particular about what he made a meal of, whether it was skunk, hedgehog or a rat he caught in his shanty.

Sometimes one of Benny's neighbors would bring him a delicacy. He loved raw eggs and upon receiving them, he would poke a little hole in each egg and suck out the contents. Later he would eat the shells.

A woman once told me that when she was a child living in North Norway, Maine, her father liked to drive her and her brother up to Greenwood City and visit "Benny". On these visits they would remain in the car; her father would roll down his window and always hand "Benny" a package of fig newtons, of which he was very fond. "Benny" would always lean on the car and running board and eat all of the fig newtons while carrying on a conversation with her father. She recalled that "to this day my brother will not touch a fig newton just because 'Benny' ate them".

Sayward Lamb from West Paris, Maine told me that his father ran a store in that town back in the 1930s, and when the bread got too old, or the fruit too ripe, his father gave them to him. The next time he went fishing at Hicks Pond, he would trade the old bread and fruit with "Benny" for the use of a boat. He remembers that "Benny" would often entertain the West Paris boys by gobbling some of their bait worms.

Everyone who knew "Benny" remembers his mulligan stew that was always simmering on the stove. Anyone who had the stomach to step inside Benny's camp would usually receive the following invitation, "Gee, Gee! boy, have some stew." Apparently everything "Benny" could get his hands on went into the stew including mice and rats. Needless to say no one ever heard of any takers.

It is rumored that George Cole once asked "Benny" to bury his dog. "Benny" is said to have cut off a sizeable hunk of meat before completing the job.

Winter was always a hardship for "Benny" and to help himself through the long winter, he would always dig potatoes in the fall for one of his neighbors, taking his pay in potatoes. He would also try to keep a good supply of rabbits and partridges on hand as well.

Benny's diet was unusual so was his appearance, for he was never too particular about what he wore. For clothes Benny's usual attire, summer or winter, was a long overcoat down to his ankles and boots up to his knees, the hats varied from time to time. "Benny" was seen wearing other outfits now and then usually old, outdated clothes given to him by his neighbors. "Benny" was seen one time approaching the bridge at Greenwood City with his long fish pole over his shoulder, wearing a stove pipe hat, black swallow-tail coat, ladies pink bloomers and boots to his knees.

Benny's hair usually hung down around his shoulders and at one time it started falling out. "Benny" told his neighbor, George Cole about his problem, and George, jokingly, told him to tar it down. Apparently "Benny" thought it might be worth trying, and he indeed tarred his hair. As Benny's hair grew longer, the tar would swing from side to side with his long hair. One Fourth of July, after doing a little celebrating at Shadagee, my uncles, Myron Winslow Sr., Roy Martin and Beryl Martin thought it was high time someone cut the tar out of Benny's hair. They pinned a tin can cover on to Myron for a badge, and when they arrived at Benny's it was announced that they were from the Health and Welfare Department and the tar had to go. It was reported that even in their condition it was not a pleasant task. It took several pairs of shears, frequent trips outside the shanty for fresh air and a little more liquid encouragement.

"Benny" always had a long beard which he would grow longer in the winter, spreading it across his chest for warmth.

It is a fact that "Benny" was a colorful character. He was also somewhat naive, but by no means was he without intelligence. "Benny" tried to live off the land as cheaply as possible and he succeeded. I am sure that many people would have failed either from the lack of survival skills, or they couldn't cope with the hardships. Even Thoreau gave up his one room shanty at Walden Pond and went back to town.

Apparently "Benny" was an honest man. My great aunt, Dora Brown, lived at Norway Center and knew "Benny". One rainy day she and her husband were away and "Benny" stopped to borrow an umbrella. The hired man was there alone and did not know "Benny" so he was reluctant to loan Mrs. Brown's umbrella. He did however, loan "Benny" a piece of tar paper. "Benny" said he would bring it back on his way home in two days. On returning, Mrs. Brown was informed of the caller. She told the hired hand the man was "Benny" Wells of Greenwood City and when he stops again to borrow something, let him have it. Two days later "Benny" came by and returned the tar paper on his way home.

"Benny" would stop and chat with his neighbors once in a while, but he was quite shy around strangers, as reporter Jack Quinn found out when he came to the City to interview "Benny" during World War II. "Benny" was quite reluctant to come out of his shanty, but with a lot of persuasion he finally agreed to emerge. During the interview "Benny" said he knew that a war was going on somewhere, but he had no idea who was fighting or what they were fighting about. He told Quinn that he knew that there were pictures that move and talk, but had never seen one. "Benny" said he had seen one airplane in his life and that he didn't like automobiles. "Benny" said he was quite satisfied with his mode of living, and had no desire to leave. He had no pets to keep him company. Once in awhile one of the neighbor's cats showed up and raised havoc with the rat infested shanty. "Benny" said his only financial worry was finding enough money every year to pay for his fishing and hunting licenses.

About 1925 my mother, Mary Martin, was a teenager, working that summer at Greenwood City for Lew and Bertha Emmons. One day as "Benny" came strolling by, my mother started a conversation with him. During their conversation Mother asked "Benny" why he never got married; he replied that he could not afford a woman; all they wanted to do was spend money and buy hair nets and silk stockings.

Linwood Emmons told me that in the summer of 1928 or 1929, he discovered a school of about two hundred suckers in a pool just below the bridge at Greenwood City. Linwood informed "Benny" to get prepared because he was going to get him some suckers. Linwood, being a young fellow, jumped into the pool with his spear and after a long and hard battle managed to spear nearly all the suckers. Meanwhile, "Benny" had been standing on the shore with every container he could get his hands on. As soon as each container was full, "Benny" would start for home with them and return to load them up again. Linwood found out later that "Benny" did not have any salt so he had "sugared down" his suckers. He assured Linwood that they were "like eating candy."

In preparing for this article I have interviewed quite a few people ranging in age from forty-five to over seventy years, and most all of them had one thing in common. As a child they were terrified of "Benny". I think part of the reason could be traced to the adults living in and around the City. One woman said that she was always told if she did not behave "Benny" would get her. A majority of the people interviewed told the writer that as a child they either ran past Benny's place, or refused to pass it. Alpheus Brooks remembers that as a child he would go to Greenwood City with his father to deliver butter to Yates' store. His father would always leave him in the wagon holding the horse. "Benny" apparently liked children, and would often stop and talk to Alpheus, as he sat there in the wagon and literally shook in his shoes. Alpheus said that as a child, he figured that if "Benny" ate rats he would think nothing of eating a little boy. He continued, "I can laugh now but as a boy it was no laughing matter."

"Benny" was harmless, of course, and it was a shame that the neighborhood kids had grown up terrified of him.

The evening of January 24, 1945 was a cold one. As "Benny" was getting ready for bed, he placed his potatoes under his mattress apparently to keep them from freezing. The next day Benny's cousin, John Ring, came by to check on him, and found that "Benny" had frozen to death during the night.

After Benny's death, "Pete" Andrews, of I.W. Andrews Funeral Home was put in charge of Benny's affairs. It was determined that he had saved enough money to pay for his burial with some left over. What little money remained was divided up between Benny's few remaining relatives. Andrews had "Benny" buried the following spring in the Forest City Cemetery at Portland, Maine. He was laid to rest in a family lot near the unmarked grave of his mother, who had been buried there years before with some of her relatives. Pete saw to it that "Benny" had a nice stone, and that his grave had perpetual care. No doubt that is the biggest luxury "Benny" ever had.

In writing this sketch I hope I have portrayed "Benny" as he was. It was not my intention to ridicule "Benny," but simply to record memories. If we were all born average this would be a boring place. Most Maine natives, myself included, usually appreciate a good colorful character, and that "Benny" was.

With the passing of "Benny" I sense a note of sadness; it was the beginning of the end of an era. There were other colorful characters in this area, and by the time the 1950s passed, they too, had died. I doubt if in the future there will ever be another "Benny" Wells, "Christmas Tree Charlie", "Alcohol Mary", "Johnny Twinkle Toes", "Kusty Wildcat", "Fosie" Newell, etc. I think it is a shame that the young people today, and in future generations will probably never have a chance to know a real colorful character.

If "Benny" were living today I know what he would say about this sketch, "Gee! Gee! Boy! you're making an awful ruckus over Old Ben."

OUR READERS WRITE

Margaret Joy Tibbetts writes:

Kathryn Hanscom Bailey was kind enough to send me a copy of remarks made by her father, Frank E. Hanscom, probably at a Congregational Church annual meeting. Margaret Hanscom Humphrey found these notes among some of the family papers.

Mr. Hanscom did not speak extemporaneously; he carefully prepared his material in advance and then went over it several times so that when delivered his remarks appeared to be spontaneous. (This same technique was used with great effect by Winston Churchill). Mr. Hanscom was an excellent speaker. The Gould functions of his day were models of smoothness and dignity, and his own polished performances played an important role. He also gave generously of his time at church functions, including recitations at which he was very skilled. I remember a tear-jerker about a Civil war soldier called "Goodbye, Jim, Take Care of Yourself" which made a lasting impression. But above all, his introductions, remarks and speeches were always done well and usually highlighted the occasion.

These notes below are a splendid example of his style. The language is well chosen and smooth. Here is a wry New England anecdote and the tribute is gracefully worked in at the end.

I can hear him now:

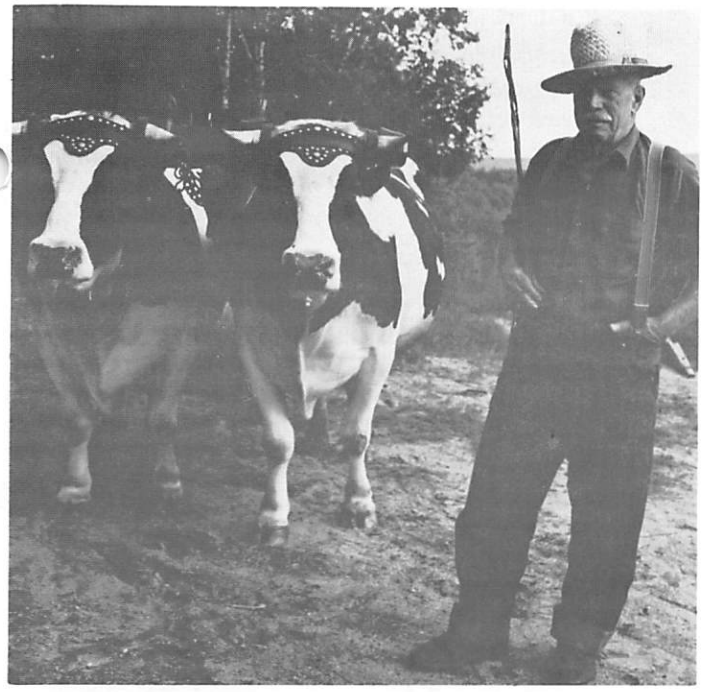
Bethel is proud of her doctors. They are not only skilled practitioners and diagnosticians, but can always be counted on the right side of every public question. It is not often we get a good story on the doctors, and when we do it ought to be passed around. Perhaps this one will be new to most of you. A certain man was sick and sent for one of our local physicians, who gave his case a careful diagnosis. He found the man in somewhat debilitated condition and suffering from what seemed to be what is known in the medical profession as a "tobacco heart". He told the man he must make a radical change and his mode of living. He must take absolute rest, must eat more roast beef, must drink a generous quantity of milk, and must smoke just one cigar a day. A few weeks later the doctor met the man on the street and congratulated him on his changed appearance. Yes, doctor, he said I'm a changed man, and I owe it all to you. I have followed your directions to the letter, but I found that one cigar a day pretty tough at first, for you see I had never smoked before. I am sure our Dr. Tibbets would never make such a mistake in diagnosis and if, by chance, tonight, he should prescribe habitual church attendance for any of us, he would doubtless be able to tell you that he had tried the medicine and found it good, for if there is a Sunday morning when I do not see him sitting directly in front of me in church, I am reasonably sure that an urgent call for his professional services is responsible for his vacant seat.

IN MEMORIAM

Died, May 17, 1985, Marjorie MarArthur Noll of Bethel, a member since 1977 and very active in the Society, former head of the Museum Committee and a member of the Membership Committee. Mrs. Noll's many contributions to the Society were highlighted in the Member Profile that appeared in the Winter 1984 issue of the Courier.

Died, June 4, 1985, Bertha Thurston of Bethel, a loyal member and generous donor since 1975.

Died, June 6, 1985, Maude Harrington of Greenwood, a member since 1981.



Albert Skillings in 1974

MEMBER PROFILE

W Albert Skillings was born in Harvard, Massachusetts on October 19, 1896, the son of Herman and Grace Grover Skillings. While born in Massachusetts, he has spent most of his life in Bethel on farms at Northwest Bethel, Skillingston, West Bethel Flat and since 1939 on his farm just off Route 5. He has been a farmer, logger, horse and ox teamster, blacksmith, river driver and continues to be active in the operations of his farm. He married in 1922 the former Stella York, who died in 1979. They had eight children. He now has 24 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

In 1985 he was elected by the Society trustees to honorary membership, the highest level membership and reserved for those who have performed outstanding service to the organization. Mr. Skillings has been a willing participant in countless oral interviews, has played an important role in the Society's school programs and for a number of years has demonstrated blacksmithing in the blacksmith shop on the grounds of the Dr. Moses Mason House. He has willingly shared his extensive knowledge of Bethel with many persons doing historical research and answered countless questions about the past. In short, he has been and continues to be a remarkable person with a keen memory and maintains an active interest in the Society and its work.

FAYE TAYLOR MEMORIAL ART SHOW WINNERS ANNOUNCED 1985

Winners of the Faye Taylor Memorial Art show sponsored each year by the Society in May are Junior Division (Grades 1-4) Phoebe Hausman-Rogers, Grade 3, Crescent Park School, 1st; Noelle Gauthier, Grade 4, Crescent Park School, 2nd; Amy Taylor, Woodstock Elementary, 3rd; Intermediate Division (Grade 5-8), Cindy Hamel, Grade 6, Woodstock Elementary, 1st; Meri Howe, Grade 6, Woodstock Elementary, 2nd; Eric Currier, Grade 5, Crescent Park School, 3rd; Senior Division (Grades 9-12), Brent Bachelder, Grade 12, Telstar Regional High School, 1st; James Gorman, Telstar, Grade 12, 2nd; Brent Bachelder, 3rd as well. Special thanks is extended to the judges James B. Owen, Timothy Kavanaugh and Helen Morton. Much appreciation is also extended to the Bethel Savings Bank for their contribution for prizes.

1985 ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

Life member Howard W. Cole has again agreed to head the Society's annual endowment campaign. He will be assisted by John B. Head, E. Louise Lincoln, Alden T. Kennett and Barbara D. Brown. The goal this year is $7500 to be reached by December 31, 1985. Contributions are welcomed in any amount and are tax deductible. Please send them to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past.

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

(1) free admission to the museum
(2) special discounts at museum store
(3) preferred rate for meeting room rental
(4) special library and archival privileges
(5) quarterly newsletter
(6) reduced course fees
(7) voting rights in the Society
(8) special invitations to Society occasions

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----------Sustaining $2.50 (Individual)
----------Contributing $10.00
----------Patron $25.00
----------Students (under 18 years) $1.00
----------Life over 55 years $50.00 single
----------Life over 55 years $75.00 couple
----------Life under 55 years $100.00 single
----------Life under 55 years $150.00 couple

BOOK REVIEW

Alice M. Corbett, *THE BROWNS OF GRAFTON, MAINE* (Berlin, N.H.: Smith & Town Printers, 1984) 105 p.p. $15. Available through the author: 21 College Heights, Orono, Maine 04473.

The family name of Brown has always been closely associated with the town of Grafton, which was located in the upper region of Oxford County. In her genealogy of this important family, Mrs. Corbett traces a branch from the emigrant, James Brown, Sr., who came to Dunstable, Massachusetts from Scotland prior to 1750. His son, Aaron Brown, later moved to Wilton, Maine. The story continues with James Brown, the eldest son of Aaron, who subsequently became one of the founders of the town of Grafton, Maine. Much local history is interwoven within the genealogy to provide an added dimension for the reader.

This book contains a brief history of Grafton, a town that flourished for many years and later ceased to be. An accompanying map and several old views of the town give a glimpse of what was an enterprising lumbering and farming community.

Much research went into this compilation and a good index accompanies the text, which is a valuable tool for the genealogist. Throughout the book are various photographs of family members. Basic guidelines are provided at the beginning of the work to explain the organization of the genealogy. A wide variety of resources are noted by the author in her forty years of research on the Brown family, as well as a few allied branches. The main scope of the text covers the history and genealogy of Captain James and Ruth Eames Swan Brown of Grafton and their descendants from 1838 to 1984, bringing some branches down to the ninth generation from James Brown, Sr. of Dunstable. A unique feature of the book is a facsimile of an eight page letter written from Grafton, Maine in 1900 in the handwriting of Mary Thompson Brown Otis. This letter reveals details about her grandfather, her parents, her brothers, and her own children and was written to a cousin, Samuel Chase Jones, who at that time was living in Canton, Maine. Apparently it was an answer to his questions relating to the family. Mary Thompson Brown Otis (1839-1910) had the distinction of being the first child to have been born in Grafton.

Mrs. Corbett, an Oxford County native, over the years has done considerable genealogical work on various family lines, some of which has been published in another of her books entitled, *HISTORY AND GENEALOGY OF THE CHASE-JONES FAMILIES* (1975). She is to be congratulated for the caliber of her work and continuing the tradition of producing fine genealogies.

Ben B. Conant

Published quarterly by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all inquiries and suggestions to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Newsletter, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.
ISSN 0749-9108

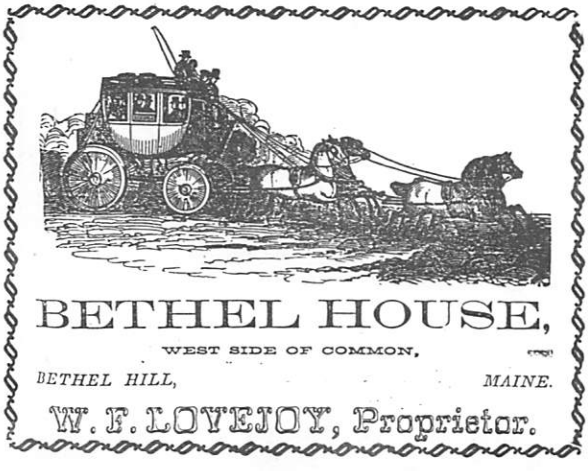
TRUSTEES SELECT NEW SECRETARY

On May 30, the Society Trustees met to select a new Secretary and Clerk of the Trustees for the Society until the annual meeting in September. The vacancy was due to the resignation of Theresa Judson whose husband has assumed the position of Town Manager in Lincoln. Elected in her place was Charles F. Raymond, a teacher at Telstar Regional High and coach of soccer and basketball. He was born in Melrose, Massachusetts and graduated from Hingham High School and the University of Massachusetts. He married the former Betsy Carlson, great granddaughter of Dr. Francis Tuell, Bethel's longtime dentist in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They and their daughter Caroline live in Dr. Tuell's old house on Broad Street.

SARAH BUCKMAN WINS 1985 DR. MOSES MASON AWARD

Sarah Buckman of South Bethel, a Telstar Regional High School junior, received the 1985 Dr. Moses Mason Award for her essay "Logging in Maine in the 1800s." The award consisting of a certificate and $100 savings bond is given each year to the student at Gould Academy or Telstar who writes the best essay on a local history subject.

The Bethel Historical Society
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